par with Indian companies. We had expected and an exercise was on in the Government of India, in the different departments, including the department headed by the hon. Minister, including the Finance Ministry also, where too a tremendous exercise was on...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I hope you will leave some time for the Minister to answer.

SHRI VISHVJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: Yes, yes, there is plenty of time. One of the exercises was to try and categorise the Non-FERA companies into a special category and that categorisation has not come about. The problem, as the hon. Minister knows and he knows it very well, because he has discussed it in various fora, is of the multinational ex-FERA companies. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is going to be his attitude, what is the attitude of his department to the recommendations as he made to the Finance Ministry regarding ex-FERA multinational companies? Are they going to come under some ambit or control or are they going to be left totally free to do what they like to profiteer, to take the money out of this country and to do what they like. I would like to know this from the hon. Minister.

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO: The hon. Member, Mr. Vishvjit Singh is one of our Consultative Committee Members. He raised so many questions and I sent him answers in writing. He expressed his opinion in the Consultative Committee, and he is satisfied with my answers. If he still has any doubt, we will certainly satisfy him.

THE DEUPTY CHAIRMAN: Next question.

*106. [*The questioners (Shri T. R. Balu and Shri V. Gopalsamy) were absent. For answer,* vide *col.* 33—38 infra.]

*107. [*The questioners (Shri Kapil Verma and Shri V. Narayanasamy) were absent. For answer,* vide *col.* 36-37 infra]

*108. [*The questioner Shri Santosh Kumar Sahu) was absent. For answer* vide 37—42 infra]

*109. [*The questioners (Shri Ashwani Kumar and Shri Lal K. Advani) were absent. For answer,* vide *col.* 43 infra].

*110. [*The questioner (Shri Sukomal Sen) was absent. For answer,* vide *col.* 43-44 infra.]

*111. [*The questioners (Shri M.A. Baby and Shri Nirmal Chatterjee) were absent. For answer,* vide *col.* 44-45 *infra*].

112. [*The questioners (Shri Chitta Basu) was absent. For answer,* vide *col.* 45 infra].

*113. [*The questioner (Shri V. Narayanasamy) was absent. For answer,* vide *col.* 45-46 infra.].

Number of oil wells drilled in cauvery basin

*114. SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of oil wells drilled in the Cauvery basin;

(b) what is the quantum of oil taken from those wells; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to start an oil refinery in Tanjore District for utilising the Cauvery Basin crude oil?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) Thirty two on-land and twenty off-shore wells have been drilled in Cauvery basin so far.

(b) Presently, about 36 tonnes of oil per day is being produced from two wells through extended production testing.

(c) There is no such proposal at present.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: It has been reported in the press that after the drilling of new wells in the Cauvery Basin, adequate quantity of petroleum has been found to estab-

lish an oil refinery in Thanjavur district. I want to know whether the Government will consider it and come forward to start an oil refinery instead of sending oil available in Cauvery Basin to Madras, thereby causing additional expenses to the Government.

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: We are trying to first explore the oil and develop oilfields, and only then we can consider the possibility of setting up a refinery. Very little quantity is being exploited just now and that is being refined in Madras. But if oil presence is established and the oil wells are developed, we will think about it.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: I want to know whether the Government has taken further steps to drill new oil wells in the Cauvery Basin in order to tap the available potentiality in that area.

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: In the Cauvery Basin we are drilling two new wells and in the off-shore also we are drilling two wells. Besides, we are having a programme with Soviet assistance costing about Rs. 364 crores. The ONGC also has got another programme for developing on-shore and off-shore sources of oil and gas, and we feel that there is a big possibility of making new strides. Only then the question of setting up an oil refinery comes.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: Would the hon. Minister tell us whether in view of the large finds of gas, he is considering any projects for running the vehicles directly on gas, and not petrol, and will that be cheaper?

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: We are experimenting with it. A few vehicles are being tried to be run on gas, and if that succeeds, we will do it.

SHRI VISHVJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: Madam, the hon. Minister has referred to off-shore exploration and on-shore exploration, or on-land explorations. I would like to know from the hon. Minister—because it relates to on-land exploration—why in the last few years we have ignored on-shore exploration? It is because of that only that we are facing the problem today. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is the quantum of investment, year by year, on on-land exploration and off-shore exploration, because that will put us into the correct perspective.

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: We are not neglecting either off-shore or on-shore. We have indicated the quantum of investment, the cost of the programme which we are taking up with the Soviet assistance in this basin. If you want for other basins....

SHRI VISHVJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: What is the comparison between off-shore and on-land? How much you are spending?

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: In this basin?

SHRI VISHVJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: I am talking about all.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.